(b) The details of funds sought by the State Government and the action taken for the year 2005-2006 is as follows:—

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Name of Schemes	Funds Sought	Amount Sanctioned (Till August, 2005)
Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries	507.43	268.00
Project Tiger	279.00	96.00
Project Elephant	227.15	171.930

(c) The details of funds released under the scheme "Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries", during the last three years to Kerala are as follows:—

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Funds Released
2002-2003	198.978
2003-2004	188.371
2004-2005	238.78879

(d) to (f) The quantum of funds released for each State depends upon the availability of funds in conjuction with the APOs received.

New policy for welfare of farmers

*294. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the living condition of farmers in our country is totally unsatisfactory inspite of India emerging as an agricultural power;

(b) if so, whether Govemment have formulated/will formulate any new policy for the welfare of farmers who are backbone of our economy;

(c) if so, the salient features of the policy;

(d) whether some reforms in the farm sector are proposed to be introduced to improve farmers' social and financial conditions; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Since around 70 per cent of the rural population continue to depend on agriculture for their livelihood, Government is conscious regarding the need to improve the living conditions of the farmers. Several schemes and programmes have been initiated to improve the income of the farmers. The National Horticulture Mission launched in May, 2005, is designed to double production of horticulture crops by 2011-12. Under this Mission, assistance is being provided for development of seeds and planting material through the public and the private sector. Under the Integrated scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) subsidy is given for seed production and distribution. Under Mini Mission-ll of Technology Mission on cotton also, assistance is provided for supply of breeder seed and production of foundation seeds. Similarly, under the scheme National Project on Organic Farming, financial support is given to farmers for setting up of fruits and vegetable wastes compost unit, bio fertilizer production and vermiculture hatcheries. Farmers also receive subsidy on purchase of various agricultural equipments, including hand tools, bullock-drawn/power-driven implements, sprinkler and drip irrigation equipments, tractors power tillers etc. Under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS), small and marginal farmers receive subsidy to the extent of 10% of the premium, at present.

It is also worth mentioning here that in order to make the Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) scheme more beneficial to the farmers by catering to their investment credit requirements, the NABARD revised the KCC scheme in August, 2004 to cover term loans for agriculture and allied activities. Keeping in view the role of animal husbandry and fishery sectors in improving income levels of farmers, particularly for landless, small and marginal farmers, special attention is being paid to animal diseases control, livestock breed improvement and development, fodder development, dairy and poultry development, and fisheries development.

Some State Governments have set up welfare funds for different categories of occupations and sectors. Thus, the welfare funds set up by the Government of Kerala cater to the needs of the workers in unorganized sector, including agriculture workers. Similarly, the Department of Agriculture, Mandi Branch, Government of Punjab is

implementing a scheme financed through funds available with Marketing Committees/Board to provide financial assistance to the farmers and labourers in case of death or illness by operating the agricultural machinery/implements and undertaking other operations at the level of farm or mandi.

(d) and (e) Since the markets set up under the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts do not facilitate direct and free marketing, marketing reforms have been given focused and priority attention. This also covers supporting services, *viz.* grading, standardization and storage. The Government has dafted a model Agricultural Produce Marketing Act, to enable the States to carry out necessary amendments in the APMC Acts, thereby allowing new markets for growers to sell their produce. As on date, 9 States have carried out amendments to their Acts. External markets are becoming increasingly important for Indian fanners in response to growing globalization, and the compelling need to avail of the opportunities from international trade in agriculture. With a view to facilitating increase in exports, the Foreign Trade Policy, 2004-09, has emphasized the importance of agricultural exports and announced a number of me: sures like Special Agricultural Produce Scheme (Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana), Funds for Development of Agri Export Zones (AEZs), etc.

Population stabilization by coordination with States

*295. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has pruned the National Commission on Population from 131 to 44 members to ensure its more effective functioning in achieving population stabilization;

(b) whether the Commission will direct implementation of policy with a view of achieving population stabilization by promoting synergy among demographic, education and environmental agencies, etc;

(c) whether the Commission has sought to promote coordination in planning and implementation of population policies across the Central and State Government agencies; and